

Setting Cabinet/Committee Agendas

Protocol

It is recognised that the setting of a Cabinet/Committee's agenda plays an important part in ensuring the effective running and operation of a Cabinet/Committee meeting.

Accordingly, this protocol seeks to promote and encourage:

- (i) healthy and informed debate;
- (ii) improved decision making; and
- (iii) efficient and effective committee administration,

by providing general guidance to Chairpersons of Cabinet/Committees and lead officers in setting and agreeing Agendas for a Cabinet/Committee meeting.

The general guidance is intended to assist Chairpersons and lead officers determine whether items proposed for inclusion on a Cabinet/Committee agenda should in fact be included on the agenda.

The guidance seeks to encourage the consideration and adoption of alternative options for making decisions and disseminating information to Cabinet/Committee (and Members generally) that are assessed to be more appropriate, effective and efficient.

Chairpersons and lead officers should have regard (but not exclusively) to the general guidance set out below.

General Guidance

1. It is important that the Chairperson remains focused on the purpose and business of Cabinet/the Committee.

The Chairperson should endeavour to manage Cabinet/the Committee by ensuring it expends its' time and energies in dealing with priorities and matters that justify Cabinet's/the Committee's time and effort.

To this end, the Chairperson should play an active role in managing and determining the Agenda of Cabinet/the Committee.

To promote greater accountability and public engagement, the Chairperson should, wherever possible, endeavour to manage the duration of Cabinet/the Committee to no more than two (2) hours. However, it is recognised that this will not always be possible for good reasons.

2. The Chairperson and lead officer(s) should satisfy themselves that the proposed agenda item falls within Cabinet/the Committee's Terms of Reference.
3. The Chairperson will determine whether the attendance by a Chief Officers or other Council Officers can be excused from a Committee Meeting. In the absence of any

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express decision, all relevant Chief Officers/Council Officers will attend the Committee.

4. If the proposed agenda item consists of a report that recommends that Cabinet/the Committee merely “notes” the report, the Chairperson should consider whether the proposed agenda item could be more effectively dealt with by the preparation and circulation of a Briefing Note.

Briefing Notes should not be used where an exemption under the Access to Information Rules is to be relied upon. In such circumstances, a report must be prepared.

5. The Chairperson should enquire whether the relevant Director has delegated powers to achieve the outcome detailed in the proposed agenda item.

If so, the Chairperson should seek an explanation/reasons from the relevant Director as to why those powers are not being exercised before agreeing to the inclusion of the item on the Cabinet/Committee agenda.

6. Where the Cabinet is being asked to make a decision under a proposed agenda item, the Chairperson should consider whether the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder should exercise his/her delegated powers.

The Chairperson should seek an explanation as to why the item should be considered by the Cabinet before agreeing its inclusion.

7. The Chairperson should encourage report authors and the relevant Director to address and amend unnecessary verbose reports.
8. The Chairperson should hold pre-meetings with relevant officers to consider Agenda items and discuss operation issues. If necessary, Chairperson should speak to relevant officers when they receive Committee Reports and address any specific issues or concerns.
9. The Chairperson should consider whether a presentation on an item to be considered by Cabinet/the Committee would assist with and improve decision making by Cabinet/the Committee.

The Chairperson should however have regard to the time required and impact upon the duration of Cabinet/the Committee and accordingly manage the Agenda.

10. The Chairperson should consider the order of Agenda items. Where officers and external people are required, then it would seem appropriate that such items are considered first.